

**Louisiana Occupational Health and Injury Surveillance – Fundamental Program**  
**Louisiana Department of Health & Hospitals, Office of Public Health**  
**Annual Report of Major Accomplishments and Outcomes**  
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The overall objectives of the program are to:

- **Interact with state partners and stakeholders**
- **Collect, analyze, and interpret surveillance data**
- **Assess the strengths and limitations of each data source**
- **Develop new data sources and additional occupational indicators**
- **Produce a statewide report and disseminate findings**
- **Develop prevention strategies and interventions and respond to emerging issues**

## **MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND OUTPUTS**

### **Occupational health indicators**

Nineteen of the 20 occupational health indicators for 2009 were calculated and submitted to NIOSH for inclusion on the CSTE website. Ongoing trend analysis of the indicators highlights areas of concern (e.g., Louisiana's fatal occupational injury rate is almost 50% greater than the national rate). The Indicator Report posted on our website is an easy and accessible resource on occupational health in Louisiana. An outcome of this is an increased use of occupational health data by other stakeholders including the Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (EPHT) and the OSHA-Baton Rouge office.

The article ([Asbestosis in Louisiana: A descriptive review and demographic analysis of hospitalizations for asbestosis, 1999-2009](#)) was published in the November/December 2011 issue of the Journal of the Louisiana State Medical Society. The article, a review of 12 years of asbestosis hospitalizations, was written in partnership with Louisiana State University's (LSU) School of Public Health. Findings were also presented at a LSU grand round for public health and medical students. A potential outcome from the article and resulting outreach activities is an increased knowledge among healthcare providers and public health professionals about asbestos hazards in Louisiana.

An article summarizing an analysis of 12-years of data for workers hospitalized with lower back surgery was printed in the November/December 2011 issue of the Louisiana Morbidity Report. Results highlight the high economic burden of this condition: there are approximately 365 surgical cases per year (fusions and discectomies are the most common procedures) and herniated disc is the most common diagnosis. Workers at risk for lower back disorders include healthcare providers (particularly nurses) and construction workers. Both of these occupations make up an important part of

Louisiana's workforce and a potential outcome from this project is increased awareness of occupational hazards (such as patient lifting) contributing to this condition.

The program mentored a public health graduate student on an analysis of emergency department data for work-related injuries. Almost three-quarters of work-related emergency department visits result from an injury. Open wounds is the most common diagnosis, followed by contusions and sprains/ strains. Young men account for the majority of visits. A summary of the analysis is being prepared and will be shared with state partners. The intermediate outcome of our ongoing mentorship program is the advancement of occupational health surveillance practices within the two graduate public health schools in the New Orleans area.

### **Interact with state partners and stakeholders**

An intermediate outcome of our experience in state-based surveillance is co-organizing SouthON: a network of local, state, and federal partners designed to increase the occupational health capacity in the region. In collaboration with Kentucky's and North Carolina's occupational health surveillance programs and NIOSH (Emergency Preparedness & Response Office, and the Sunshine ERC), we organized and conducted the first meeting of the Southern States Occupational Network (SouthON). The one-day meeting was held in Orlando in December 2011. There were 33 attendees, including representatives from 10 of the 12 Southeast states. The meeting agenda and presentations are housed on the Sunshine ERC's website (<http://health.usf.edu/publichealth/erc/index.htm>). We continue to be actively involved in SouthON by assisting in the planning and preparation of a NIOSH Conference Grant and the next SouthON meeting to be held in Tampa in December 2012. We also participated in the planning and presentation of two occupational health webinars targeting SouthON states: An Overview of Occupational Indicators, and Occupational Health Communications and Information Exchange (OSHA). The OSHA webinar included 4 sub-topics: summer heat campaign; HHE investigation, Lead referrals, and SouthON listserv.

Improving the visibility of our occupational health program among state and federal partners occurred through presentations at different venues: Convocation of Southern State Epidemiologist; the Louisiana Public Health Association Conference, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture & Forestry Pesticide Applicator Re-Certification meeting, CSTE Disaster Epidemiology Workshop, and the Environmental Public Health Tracking Fall Conference.

### **Respond to emerging issues**

The program is developing expertise in disaster surveillance and emergency preparedness and response. An intermediate outcome of this experience is the solicitation of results, recommendations, and best practices from state and federal partners. This includes a presentation on Louisiana's BP oil spill worker surveillance at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CSTE Disaster Epidemiology workshop; serving as an external reviewer for the NIOSH Deepwater Horizon Roster Summary Report; participating in the FEMA Region VI Food Safety Functional Exercise; and consulting with the North Carolina Occupational Health Program on their emergency responder surveillance protocols and database.

Exposure investigation of a cluster of lead poisoning cases among recreational shooters resulted in educational outreach activity targeting indoor range employees. The intermediate outcome of this activity was the dissemination of our findings to influence range practices. The training, done in conjunction with OSHA-Baton Rouge office, focused on the hazards of lead, cleaning techniques to minimize lead exposure, and OSHA standards for airborne lead exposure.

### **Enhance surveillance activities**

The program is actively engaged in activities to enhance surveillance data. The NIOSH/National Occupational Mortality Surveillance is adding census occupation and industry codes to LA's Mortality Data. In partnership with LA's EPHT program, we obtained emergency department data for 2010 & 2011. Lastly, we are working closely with LA's BRFSS program to implement the industry/occupation module in the next survey.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Lackovic, M. Surveillance of Workers during the BP Oil Spill. Presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual CSTE Disaster Epidemiology Workshop, Atlanta, Georgia, May 2012

Lackovic, M, Funk R. What is the South & What Do We Have in Common? Presented at the 1<sup>st</sup> SouthON meeting, Orlando, Florida, December, 2011

Lackovic, M. Overview of Indicators for Occupational Health Surveillance. Presented at SouthON webinar, February, 2012.

Lackovic M. Can We Develop an Occupational Health Network in the Southeast? Presented at Convocation of Southern State Epidemiologist, January 2012, New Orleans.

Davis C, Streva K, Katner A, Lackovic M et al. Evaluating Asbestosis Hospitalizations in Louisiana, 2000-2009. Presented at the Environmental Public Health Tracking Conference. Fall, 2011.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

Davis C, Vijaykumar J, Lackovic M, Diaz J. Asbestosis in Louisiana: A descriptive review and demographic analysis of hospitalizations for asbestosis, 1999-2009. J La State Med Soc, Vol 163, Nov/Dec 2011

Lee SJ, Mehler L, Beckman J, Diebolt-Brown B, Prado JB, Lackovic M, Waltz J, Mulay P, Schwartz A, Mitchell Y, Moraga-McHaley S, Gergely R, Calvert G. Acute pesticide illnesses associated with off-target pesticide drift from agricultural applications — 11 States, 1998–2006. Env Health Perspectives. August 2011. Volume 119, number 8.

Calvert GM, Keralis JM, Kasner EJ, Mehler L, Beckman J, Bonnar-Prado J, Lee S, Diebolt-Brown B, Mulay P, Lackovic M, Waltz J, Schwartz A, Mitchell Y, Moraga-McHaley S, Gergely R. Gender Differences in Acute Pesticide Poisoning among Farmworkers in the United States, 1998-2006. Am J Ind Med. 55:571-583, 2012.

Davis C, Lackovic M, Singleton C. An analysis of low back pain disorders in workers, Louisiana, 1998-2009, Louisiana Morbidity Report, Vol 22, No. 6 Nov/Dec 2011.